

MEMORIAL

OF THE

CITIZENS OF BEAUFORT, S. CAROLINA,

AND ITS VICINITY,

REMONSTRATING AGAINST THE PASSAGE

OF THE

Tariff Bill.

FEBRUARY 23, 1824.

Read, and, referred to the committee of the whole House to which is committed
the bill to amend the several acts for imposing duties on Imports.

WASHINGTON:

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1824.

MEMORIAL.

*To the honorable the Speaker and House of Representatives of the
United States in Congress assembled:*

The memorial of the inhabitants of Beaufort, and its vicinity,
RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That your memorialists have, at other times, expressed to your honorable body their conviction, that an increase of the duties on Imports would be at variance with the plainest maxims of good government, inconsistent with the welfare of the country at large, and particularly destructive to the agricultural interests of the Southern States. These arguments have been enforced by others, and especially by our fellow citizens of Charleston, with such unanswerable ability, that your memorialists will not weaken them by an attempt at recapitulation. Feeling, as they do, however, that they are the devoted victims of the policy proposed, they solicit the attention of your honorable body to a brief statement of those evils which would fall with severe pressure on themselves.

Your memorialists would respectfully observe that, engaged, in common with their fellow citizens of the South, in agricultural pursuits, they are the cultivators of that species of Cotton for which, it is notorious, the manufacturing establishments of our own country furnish no demand whatever; that the quantity of fine cottons annually produced, is already beyond the consumption of Europe; that, with all the markets of Europe open to them, the staple (for which alone their lands are calculated) is depressed, to the grievous injury of the planters; that, to them, (whatever it might be to others of their fellow citizens engaged in cultivating the inferior Cottons) the loss of a foreign market would be the annihilation of their income.

Your memorialists would further remark, that, as it has been their fortune to be possessors of lands, which, from the peculiarity of their soil and situation, produce the finest Cottons in the world, so it has happened, for that very reason, that lands have been transmitted to them, or have been purchased by them, at a high valuation—lands which, in common with the rest of their property, now experience the most unexampled depreciation. They cannot conceal from themselves—they would not conceal from your honorable body, the distressing fact, that the property of their fellow citizens, under the pressure of the present disastrous times, is daily sacrificed for a moiety of its cost. How, then, shall they discharge their contracts,

when Congress shall have loaded them with new vexations? Can the sufferers fail to see that they are legislated out of their property? Can they fail to think that they have been sacrificed to a system of favoritism?—a system in deadly hostility to the equal rights secured by the Constitution. The stake at issue is far too valuable to be hazarded on so rash a cast—so reckless an experiment—which they firmly believe must be abandoned if made—which they earnestly hope may never be made at all.

Your memorialists would respectfully advert to the growing prosperity of the independent governments of South America, (liberated from the thralldom of monopoly,) to the encreasing production of a staple but little inferior to their own, and to the improvement of machinery in Europe, which has enabled the foreign manufacturer, with a coarser, to supply the place of the finer Cottons—and ask your honorable body, whether they have no just causes of alarm? Whether they have no reason to apprehend that the heavy duty imposed on the manufactured article may be retaliated by one equally heavy on the raw material? By one, in short, which would amount to a prohibition? In case of a result so greatly to be deprecated, could they fail to perceive, that the wise provision of the Constitution, prohibiting a tax on Exports (that barrier against the injustice of the stronger) would be, to them, a mere nullity? What difference would it make to them, whether Congress prohibited the export of their fine Cottons altogether, or, (what is here the same thing) the culture itself? or, whether it taxed the article of their growth, when returned to them in a manufactured state, so as to insure its prohibition in a foreign market where alone it was wanted? It would afford them little consolation that they have been prostrated by a circuitous and indirect blow, against which the shield of the Constitution had been vainly opposed.

Your memorialists would respectfully suggest, that they are not able (amidst the unexampled distresses of the agricultural interest) to pay the enhanced price which the Tariff bill would impose on articles of first necessity, nor disposed to pay the monopoly price to the home manufacturer. That they would feel it an act due to their past sacrifices, political and personal, and to the importance of the interest involved, rather to rescue a patriotic and suffering class of the community from their difficulties than to build up a *new interest* on their ruin—rather, by a relaxation of existing duties, to secure them a preference in a foreign market, than, by new impositions, to provoke a spirit of retaliation, and drive them from that they now enjoy.

They would, therefore, protest at once, and with one voice, against a measure fraught with such ruinous consequences—a measure which, as they understand and feel it, they must incessantly struggle against—and which, if carried into effect, would leave upon their minds the impression of deep and unmerited injury.

WILLIAM ELLIOTT,	} Committee.
JOHN VERDIN,	
THOS. FULLER, jun.	
G. W. MONALL,	
WM. J. GRAYSON,	